

Class Action

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Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Class Action is part of the Project Northland alcohol prevention curriculum series, a multilevel, multiyear program proven to delay the age at which young people begin drinking, reduce alcohol use among those who have already tried drinking, and limit the number of alcohol-related problems of young drinkers.

Class Action is an 8- to 10-session curriculum that looks at the real-world social and legal consequences involving teens in grades 9 through 12 and alcohol. Students are divided into six legal teams to prepare and present hypothetical civil cases in which someone has been harmed as a result of underage drinking. Using a casebook along with audiotaped affidavits and depositions, teens build legal cases that they will present to a jury of their peers. The six case topics include: (1) Drinking and Driving; (2) Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; (3) Drinking and Violence; (4) Date Rape; (5) Drinking and Vandalism; (6) School Alcohol Policies.

Class Action can be used as part of the Project Northland series or as a standalone program.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Project Northland curriculum series was developed in a region that led the nation in alcohol-related traffic fatalities. The project was the largest and most rigorous alcohol use trial ever funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Over a decade of research at the University of Minnesota went into the development of Project Northland, including Class Action. The initial study, done with students in grades 6 through 8, demonstrated a decrease in teen alcohol use by 30 percent and a significant decline in tobacco and marijuana use. Two additional NIAAA research grants were obtained to continue the series with high school students. The resulting Class Action curriculum was shown to have a positive impact on students' tendency to use alcohol, binge drinking, and ability to obtain alcohol.



RECOGNITION

MODEL PROGRAM

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

IOM CLASSIFICATION

UNIVERSAL

INTERVENTION TYPE

SCHOOL-BASED

The Class Action curriculum provides clear, step-by-step instructions for implementing the 8- to 10-session program in a classroom setting.

CONTENT FOCUS

ALCOHOL USE/ABUSE

Although Project Northland as a whole, and Class Action in particular, focuses on the issue of teen alcohol use, research has shown that the program also has an influence on nondrinking teens' subsequent use of tobacco and other drugs, particularly marijuana. The Class Action cases also address other health or prevention topics such as fetal alcohol syndrome, violence, date rape, and driving under the influence.

Students learn social competency skills such as resisting peer pressure and positive decision-making through discussing and debating the six legal cases.

The objectives of the program included:

1. Students will become more aware of the legal issues surrounding underage alcohol use.
2. Students will recognize underage alcohol use as a community-wide problem.
3. Students will discuss and debate the legal intricacies of alcohol-related issues.
4. Students will learn about the social, emotional, economic, and legal consequences of underage alcohol use.
5. Students' norms concerning underage alcohol use will shift in a positive direction.

Parents as an adjunct strategy:

The entire Project Northland series sees the parents' role as very important in influencing teens' use of alcohol. In the Class Action program, parents are involved in educating their teens through the distribution of parent postcards. These postcards cover four main topics: talking to your teens about alcohol use, not providing alcohol to teens, steps parents can take to prevent use, and the importance of getting involved with this alcohol use at the community level.

INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN

INDIVIDUAL

Life/social skills training

PEER

Peer resistance education; peer development of non-use norms

FAMILY

Parent education/parenting skills training; task-oriented family education sessions to improve family interactions (e.g., parent involvement in program homework assignments, etc.)

SCHOOL

Classroom drug education; classroom-based skills development

COMMUNITY

Establishment of supervised youth recreational and cultural programs; multiagency activities and collaboration

SOCIETY

Enforcement of tobacco and alcohol sales laws

KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES/COMPONENTS

BOOSTER SESSIONS, IN-/AFTER-SCHOOL CURRICULA, PEER LEADERSHIP, SCHOOL/COMMUNITY COLLABORATION, SKILL DEVELOPMENT, SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION EDUCATION

BOOSTER SESSIONS

Class Action is a substance abuse prevention curriculum that can be used as a booster session for the Project Northland series or as a standalone curriculum.

IN-/AFTER-SCHOOL CURRICULA

The curriculum is based on the social influences theory of behavior change, where students are asked to debate and discuss the social influences to use alcohol and the negative consequences those influences have not only on the individual teen, but on the community as a whole.

PEER LEADERSHIP

Class Action is a peer-led program that uses interactive methods to accomplish its instructional goals. Students debate and discuss the consequences of substance abuse, thus changing the social norms around alcohol use and changing negative peer pressure into positive peer pressure.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Class Action also encourages the involvement of the community in the program, through the addition of outside speakers, student research on their own community issues around alcohol use, and student involvement in community events (using ideas from Project Northland's *SuperCharged!* materials).

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Class Action involves the development of a number of skills including resistance skills, decisionmaking skills, social competence skills, and leadership skills.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION EDUCATION

Class Action is a substance abuse prevention curriculum aimed at reducing alcohol use that results shows also affects later tobacco and marijuana use.

OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE, REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS, OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE

- The Tendency to Use Alcohol scale incorporates intentions to use alcohol in the future as well as current levels of monthly and weekly use, so provides a dynamic measure of alcohol use for this population. The reduction in binge drinking is particularly important, since underage youth have been shown to engage in more binge drinking than those of legal drinking age and is clearly a problem for this younger age group.
- Reduced increases in binge drinking in high school by 50% through 12th grade

REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

- The multicomponent community-wide approach, targeting high school students' access to alcohol and changing community norms, appears to have been effective in reducing the growth rate in alcohol use in the intervention communities. The trend data showed significantly less increase in alcohol use among students in the intervention communities, as measured by the Tendency to Use Alcohol scale, binge drinking, and, marginally, past month alcohol use ($P < 0.07$).
- Reduced increases in alcohol use and intentions to use alcohol in high school by 33% through 12th grade
- Reduced the ability to purchase alcohol in off-sale outlets by 80%

OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

Although Project Northland as a whole, and Class Action in particular, focuses on the issue of teen alcohol use, research has shown that the program also has an influence on nondrinking teens' subsequent use of tobacco and other drugs, particularly marijuana.

HOW IT WORKS

The Class Action curriculum is delivered during 8 to 10 weekly classroom sessions. During the sessions, students are divided into six "legal" teams to prepare and present hypothetical civil cases in which someone has been harmed as a result of underage drinking. Using a

casebook, along with audiotaped affidavits and depositions, students build legal cases and present them to a jury of their peers. The six case topics include date rape, drinking and driving, drinking and vandalism, drinking and violence, fetal alcohol syndrome, and school alcohol policies.

Class Action encourages community involvement through the use of outside speakers within classroom sessions or for the entire school, student research on alcohol-use issues in their own community, and student involvement in community events (using ideas from Project Northland's SuperCharged! materials). Parent education involves the distribution of four colorful postcards with key messages for parents about teen alcohol use and their role in preventing its use.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

Many schools or school districts coordinate delivery of the entire program from grade 6 through 12. This coordination is not mandatory, but highly recommended. Individual schools or teachers can also purchase Class Action and implement the program on their own.

Class Action 1-day teacher training is highly recommended, but not mandatory. The teacher training curriculum package and student materials may be obtained from Hazelden. No special space requirements are needed, other than the ability to have students meet in groups around tables or by moving desks together. An overhead projector and tape/CD player are the only equipment needed.

Many schools or school districts choose to designate a Project Northland coordinator who is in charge of coordinating the entire program from grades 6–12. This is not mandatory, but highly recommended. However, individual teachers may purchase Class Action and implement it on their own.

All the materials a teacher needs to teach Class Action are included in this curriculum package, with the exception of photocopies of some student handouts. Class Action can be used with any number of students, but six groups of four to five students (24–30 students) is optimal. Class Action sessions can be taught weekly, or more often if desired.

No special space requirements are needed other than the ability to have students meet in groups. An overhead projector or tape/CD player are needed.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Twenty-four school districts were randomized to treatment and control in 1991. The students in these school districts were followed from 6th to 12th grades, from 1991 to 1998, and were the study cohort. The schools remained in the same treatment conditions through high school. The main outcome measure, alcohol use, came from an annual survey of all the students in the study cohort. The survey consisted of individual items and scales. In addition, process measures were used to assess the degree of fidelity to the intervention. One measure involved young-looking 21-year-old females making purchase attempts at all of the alcohol outlets throughout the school district.

DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

25–52 WEEKS

Amount of time required to deliver the program and obtain documented outcomes:

Class Action is an 8- to 10-session curriculum (45 to 50 minutes per session). Time should be allowed between sessions for students to work on their legal cases and oral presentations. The number of sessions could be shortened, but the fidelity of the product is best maintained by holding 8 to 10 sessions.

INTENDED SETTING

RURAL, TRIBAL RESERVATIONS

This program was researched in rural settings and at schools with seven American Indian reservations. It has, however, been successfully implemented in urban, suburban settings.

FIDELITY

Components that must be included in order to achieve the outcomes cited by the developer:

To maintain fidelity, the 8 to 10 sessions should be completed. The curriculum provides clear instructions for implementing these sessions; closely following these instructions will maintain the fidelity of the product.

List all fidelity instruments and information on where each instrument can be obtained:

There is a pre-/post-survey that can be implemented before and after using the curriculum. This survey was used in the original study. For copies of the survey, contact Hazelden.

BARRIERS AND PROBLEMS

Key barriers and problems associated with the use of this Model Program and potential solutions:

Problem: Funding for the program

Solution: Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services searches for grant opportunities and will assist a school or community in writing a grant application to implement Class Action at no charge.

PERSONNEL

FULL-TIME

The types of positions needed to successfully implement the Model Program:

If a school or school district is implementing the entire Project Northland series, it is recommended, but not mandatory, that a Project Northland program coordinator is engaged to oversee all phases of program implementation and to train teachers. If using Class Action alone, individual teachers can implement the program on their own.

Typical staffing issues encountered by users when implementing this Model Program and potential solutions:

Teachers should be comfortable and experienced in facilitating small-group experiential learning settings, utilizing a civil case reenactment format. Teachers should also be comfortable adapting the program to their specific student populations and needs.

EDUCATION

UNDERGRADUATE, SPECIAL CERTIFICATION

Educational qualifications of the personnel needed to successfully implement this Model Program:

Teacher certification and experience working with high school students in experiential learning environments are all that is needed. Additional training specifically on the use of the Class Action curriculum is recommended.

PERSONNEL TRAINING

Type: SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS, CLASSROOM, WORKBOOK

Location: ONSITE (of user) Length: BASIC

The program can be purchased and implemented without training. However, it is strongly recommended that the program coordinator and key teachers be trained in the use of the curriculum and the parent and community involvement components. Participants are then certified to train additional direct providers of the curriculum for grades 9–12.

Class Action teacher training is conducted in 1 day. Separate 1- to 2-day community mobilization training may be contracted, depending on community readiness. This training would involve key community leaders in the process of evaluating existing alcohol problems in the community, and identifying strategies and organizations needed to affect public policy and reduce youth access to alcohol.

COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$101–\$1,000

Cost considerations for implementing this program as recommended by the developer:

TRAINING COSTS:

Class Action Training is highly recommended but not mandatory. Contact Hazelden Publishing

and Educational Services at 1-800-328-9000, ext. 4030, for information on a 1-day training or for other technical support.

MATERIALS COSTS:

- The complete curriculum package \$495.00
 - Teacher’s Manual (with reproducible handouts in a three-ring binder)
 - 42 casebooks (seven of each of six titles)
 - One set of audiotapes
 - Four parent postcards (30 each)
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INTENDED AGE GROUP

EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14), TEENAGER (15–17)

Class Action is designed for use with students in grades 9 through 12.

INTENDED POPULATION

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE, WHITE

The original research reviewed by the National Registry of Effective Programs and Practices (NREPP) was from studies primarily conducted with White students and students from seven American Indian reservations. The program now has been successfully replicated in rural, suburban, and urban settings with African Americans, Asians, and Hispanic/Latino populations.

GENDER FOCUS

BOTH GENDERS

Developed for both male and female students.

REPLICATIONS

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

A list of a small sample of the schools and organizations that have implemented Class Action since its publication in 2002 is below. There have been no program changes except to fit program activities to different student population’s needs.

REPLICATION SETTINGS

Class Action is being used in a wide variety of urban, suburban, and rural settings throughout the United States.

REPLICATION SITES

Class Action is now being implemented in the Los Angeles Unified School District, a highly ethnically diverse audience.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Judy Johnson
Lakeville Area Public Schools
18610 Ipava Avenue
Lakeville, MN 55044
Phone: (952) 469-6167

Rona Cole
Los Angeles Unified School District
355 South Grand Avenue, 10th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071
Phone: (213) 633-7822

Gelane Nelson
DeKalb County Board of Education
PO Box 997
Rainsville, AL 35986
Phone: (756) 638-9797

Deb Baron
Pledge for Life Partnership
189 E Court, Suite 403
Kankakee, IL 60901
Phone: (815) 936-4606

ADAPTATIONS

No adaptations or changes have been made.

CONTACT INFORMATION

ABOUT THE DEVELOPER

Class Action was developed at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology. Developers were Cheryl Perry, Ph.D., Carolyn Williams, Ph.D., and Sara Veblen-Mortenson, M.S.W., M.P.H. Currently, the program is distributed through Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services in Center City, MN.

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Ann Standing, National Education and Prevention Sales Manager

Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services

15251 Pleasant Valley Road, Box 176

Center City, MN 55012-0176

Toll free: (800) 328-9000, ext. 4030

Local: (651) 213-4030

Fax: (651) 213-4793

E-mail: astanding@hazelden.org

Web site: www.hazelden.org

To order materials or a free 30-day preview contact:

Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services

Box 176

Center City, MN 55012-0176

Toll free: (800) 328-9000

Fax: (651) 213-4590